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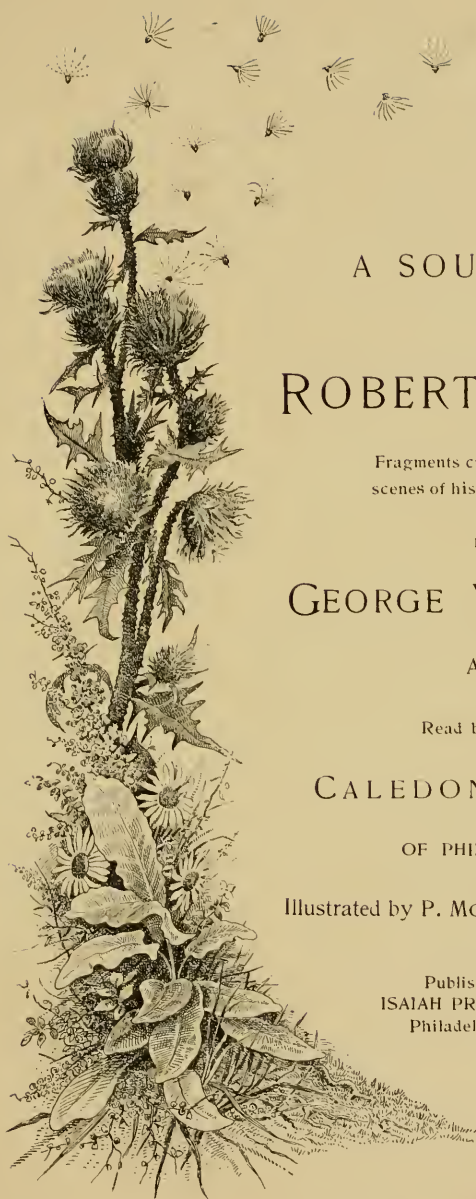
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Robert Burns

James Watson sculp.



A SOUVENIR
OF
ROBERT BURNS

Fragments culled amid the
scenes of his chequered life

BY
GEORGE W. PETTIT

Artist

Read before the
CALEDONIAN CLUB
OF PHILADELPHIA

Illustrated by P. MORAN AND E. F. FABER.

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PREFACE.

Great geniuses belong to certain epochs of the world's history, and not to any particular nation or century. They are the result of the accumulated knowledge, the sentiments, and the aspirations of preceeding generations. They are claimed by and justly belong to the world at large, and not exclusively to the country which gave them birth.

By the expression of universal sentiments, they give that touch of nature which makes the whole world akin, and which not only serves to unite more closely the inhabitants of their own country, but nations which differ widely on almost every vital principle.

Among such we have Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian, and Leonardo, in art. Shakspeare, Goethe, Chateaubriand, Scott, and Burns, in literature.

The heart of every German thrills with pride when Goethe, or Schiller are mentioned, and Scotchmen severed from their bonnie highlands by many a league of trackless sea,

lovingly clasps the hand of a brother Scot when memories of "auld lang syne" are recalled by the familiar songs of Robert Burns.

To record the many phases of character belonging to a genius such as Burns possessed would be far beyond the scope of this brief essay ; which, is intended solely, to convey a faithful transcript of the impressions received from scenes amid which the greater part of his melancholy career was passed.

G. W. P.



BIRTH-PLACE OF ROBERT BURNS.

BIRTH-PLACE OF ROBERT BURNS.

*“ The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen ;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been ,
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee ;
But I’ll remember thee, Glencairn ,
And a’ that thou hast done for me ! ”*

ILLUSTRATIONS.

- ✓ PORTRAIT OF ROBERT BURNS.
- ✓ BIRTH-PLACE OF ROBERT BURNS.
- ✓ TWA BRIGS OF AYR.
- ✓ ALLOWAY KIRK.
- ✓ BURNS MONUMENT, AYR.
- ✓ AULD BRIG OF DOON.
- ✓ BANKS OF DOON.
- ✓ FROM THE BROWN HILLS OF CARRICK.
- ✓ MOSSGIEL.
- ✓ AILSA CRAIG.





THE TWA BRIGS OF AYR.
The first of these is the Twa Brig of Ayre, which is a small, but very fine, building, situated on the banks of the river, and is one of the most beautiful in the county. It is a very old building, and is said to have been built by the first Duke of Argyll, in the year 1680. It is a very fine building, and is one of the most beautiful in the county. It is a very old building, and is said to have been built by the first Duke of Argyll, in the year 1680. It is a very fine building, and is one of the most beautiful in the county. It is a very old building, and is said to have been built by the first Duke of Argyll, in the year 1680.

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TWA BRIGS OF AYR.



MORE than a century and a quarter ago, on a dark night of mid-winter, a terrible storm passed over the British Isles; a tempest of wind and sleet, that swept the barren moors and whistled through the solitary glens of Scotland; lashing the billows of old ocean with fury against her rocky headlands.

Other storms as wild, have before and since swept over those sea-girt shores, and will so continue, at intervals, until the end of time. Why is it then that this one storm should be forever remembered, whilst others are so soon forgotten?

On that particular night, amid the moaning and sighing of the wind, and the beating of hail and sleet, within a frail clay biggin erected by the horny hands of an over-worked Scotchman, was heard the first-wailing cry of a certain peasant boy, as he was ushered into a world as stormy

as the elements around; a boy who was destined by the force of his native genius to write the songs of his country; songs that have been heard from "Indus to the Pole," and which have served more than anything else to unite his countrymen in one great bond of brotherhood. That boy was Robert Burns.

Had a belated traveler chanced to pass that way, he would have beheld a light glimmering from that one cottage window long after the other firesides were wrapped in darkness. That light which then shone so lonely is emblematic of his solitary genius, which has illumined all parts of the world where the English language is spoken; and that spot from which that light emanated, marks an humble centre within a circuit of many miles which will be forever known as the Land of Robert Burns. It is these scenes and places made immortal by the magic of his genius, encompassed within this space, that I have chosen for the subject of this essay. "Auld Ayr" which Burns tells us,

"Ne'er a town surpasses,

For honest men an bonnie lasses,"

is situated at the mouth of the river of the same name, on

an eminence that slopes gently to the sea, and in the vicinity of scenery unsurpassed for its beauty. Here the river, (spanned by the "Twa Brigs," celebrated because Burns chose to write about them) flows murmuring to the sea, loath to part from the flowery meads and fragrant dells through which it has gone singing, lending a pastoral beauty to the landscape by its winding and picturesque course.

Ayr presents a very different appearance now, from what it did in the days of the poet. The rural life and labors of a hundred years ago have given way before the more certain sources of wealth demanded by the luxurious ideas of later generations. The old bridge still stands after being a silent witness of the destruction of the new, as the poet predicted in his dialogue of "The Brigs of Ayr."

"I'll be a Brig, when ye're a shapeless cairn!"

Another and more substantial structure has been erected in its place.

The town is now more famous on account of its association with the writings of Burns, than for anything it contains. The old tavern, celebrated the world over as the

place where Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny held their famous orgies, still stands and is in excellent preservation; though of course much altered. No one who visits it should fail to refresh himself with the foaming ale, or to sit in Tam's favorite chair.

“Fast by an ingle bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;”

There is a painting now, over the doorway of the inn, entitled the “Stirrup Cup.” Tam, mounted on his old grey Meg, clasps the hand of Souter Johnny who staggers by the side of his horse. The landlord holds a lantern over his head, whilst the landlady stands in the door with a candle, her apron and the mane of the mare tossing wildly in the wind.

“Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches, Tam maun ride;
That hour o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.”



They went back from the old town of Ayr, along the coast
 up to where stood the church, just to Ayr, where I
 "sawed with," and to the bridge at Dun. It is the same
 old road on that evening night, and as we are about
 to follow, with glimmering lights and a lanterned way to illumine
 our pathway, we descend towards a narrow valley gradually
 crossed out by the stone railway to the town where
 Tam sits.

"Cross the bridge"

Where in the dark the mountain shrouded

And pass the river and reach the town.

Where down the river the water flows

And runs the white road by the shore.

Where down the river the water flows

And runs the white road by the shore.

Where down the river the water flows

The old road, the road of the old town, is
 still to be seen, but at some distance from the highway
 it is accounted for by the fact, that the old road by which
 the Duke and Duke himself had to travel, was considerably
 to the west, and by no means straight in that by which
 the highway is now conducted.



ALLOWAY KIRK.

This road leads from the old town of Ayr, past the cottage in which Burns was born, past "Auld Alloway's haunted kirk," and over the bridge of Doon. It is the same that Tam took on that eventful night, and, as we are about to follow with clearer heads and a beautiful sun to illumine our pathway, we descend towards a narrow valley evidently scooped out by the brook, tributary to the Doon, where Tam rode

. "'cross the foord
Where in the snaw the chapman smooored,
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel!"

All these local indications of Tam's ride from Ayr, are still to be seen, but at some distance from the highway. This is accounted for by the fact, that the old road by which the hero, and Burns himself had to travel, was considerably to the west, and by no means so straight as that by which the traveler is now conducted.

About two miles from Ayr, on a slight bend in the road, stands an humble thatch-roofed cottage; bearing beside the doorway a signboard. We pause, and reverently and instinctively uncover our heads as we read the simple inscription.

“Robert Burns, the Ayrshire poet, was born under this roof, on the 25th of Jan. A. D. 1759, died 21st of July A. D. 1796, aged 37½ years.”

This then is the cottage we had come so far to see. We enter, but I cannot attempt to describe our feelings as we stood before the little recess in the kitchen, just large enough to hold a bed, where the poet was born. There still stands the old dresser, bent and deformed by age, made by his father; and we have already seen that a portion of these walls was the work of his hands.

I recalled the time, when I, a mere child, first saw a wood cut representing this quiet wayside cottage; not dreaming then that I should one day do myself the honor of beholding this spot, visited by persons from every quarter of the civilized globe; and one which no doubt, unborn

generations will come thousands of miles, across stormy seas and vast continents, to pay homage to this shrine of genius, the birth place of Robert Burns.

The biographers of the poet with one accord, point out this cottage as the one he had in mind when he wrote that immortal poem "The Cotter's Saturday Night." This poem, Lockhart justly remarks, "is of all Burns's pieces the one whose exclusion from the collection would be most injurious, if not to the genius of the poet, at least to the character of the man." In writing this poem Burns has given us not only a vivid and faithful picture of his father's fireside, but of thousands of others throughout the length and breadth of the land—for—

"From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur
springs,

That makes her lov'd at home rever'd
abroad.

Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,

'An honest man's the noblest work of
God.' "

Our next place of destination near the cottage is "Alloway's auld haunted kirk," with nothing but its two gables and the side walls remaining; one of the gables,

(that next the road,) is surmounted by a small stone arch, in which the bell still hangs. The wood-work, such as door and window frames, roof and rafters, are all gone. This can scarcely be wondered at, when we take into consideration the vast number of snuff-boxes, and other articles of similar character which have been sold as portions of the old kirk.


Between the gate of the church-yard and the ruin, is the mossy marble which marks the grave of Burns's father, erected by the poet, and inscribed with a touching epitaph from his pen, sincerely expressing his filial affection and regard; it is as follows:—

“O ye whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious reverence and attend;
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father, and the generous friend.”

“The pitying heart that felt for human woe;
The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride;
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
For e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side.”

I have understood that it was at one time the desire of Burns to be buried here, and what more fitting monument





BURNS MONUMENT, AYR.

could he have had than "Auld Alloway's haunted kirk," made immortal by his genius? The interior of this church, since occupied as a place of sepulchre, should have contained his remains alone. Clustering vines, vines he loved so dearly would have grown gracefully over this ruin. There, with the winds of Doon to wave the grass above him, and amid the singing of birds, his body should rest in peace forever.

Reluctantly leaving this spot, where we have so fondly lingered, we pass on to the Burns monument. It is situated on the banks of the Doon, surrounded by an enclosed plot of ground, laid out with peaceful walks and flowering shrubs.

It consists of an open circular temple of classic beauty, encircled by nine graceful Corinthian columns, emblematic of the nine muses, and rests upon a triangular base, the sides of which are toward the three chief divisions of Ayrshire, Kile, Carrick, and Cunningham.

The graceful entablature supported by these columns, is surmounted by a circular roof, over which is appropriately placed a tripod. Within the triangular base is a round chamber where the subdued light falls through stained glass

placed in the cupola. This chamber contains many relics connected with the personal history of the poet. Beside a complete edition of his published works, is his portrait, a copy after Nasmyth, by Stevens, and a marble bust from the chisel of Patrick Park, spirited sketch of scenes from his poems, and the marriage ring of Bonnie Jean: but the objects over which one is ever wont to linger the longest is the bible which he presented to Highland Mary on the occasion of their final meeting, and a lock of her hair. This is very light, almost colorless, no doubt much faded; but who can look upon it without having vividly before him the angelic image of that pure and delicate creature Mary Campbell, the Highland Mary of Burns.

The bible is in two volumes; on the first of which is inscribed in Burns's hand "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, I am the Lord;" and on the second volume, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oath." The names of Robert Burns and Mary Campbell, which were originally inscribed on the volumes, are nearly effaced.

There is a sentiment as pure as it is touching in the manner in which Burns was betrothed to this dear girl.

Some allusion is made to it, I believe, in every one of the many lives published of the poet.

“They plighted their vows on the Sabbath to render them more sacred ; they made them by a burn where they had courted, that open nature might be a witness ; they made them over an open Bible, to show that they thought of God in this mutual act ; and when they had done, they both took water in their hands and scattered it in the air, to intimate that as the stream was pure so were their intentions. On that day they parted never to meet again ! She died in a burning fever, within six months, and all that he had of her was a lock of her long bright hair, and her Bible which she exchanged for his.”

This is the oft repeated story, but who would wish it forgotten ? It is the remembrance of the past, the recalling of the days that are gone which gives to the old songs their sentiment, and to the friendships of youth a purity and freshness of feeling we can never experience again.

To the untimely death of Highland Mary, we owe one of the sweetest poems ever written in any language ; that to “Mary in Heaven.” What can be more beautiful or pathetic than the first stanza ?

“Thou ling’ring star, with less’ning ray,
That lov’st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usherest in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.

O Mary ! dear departed shade !
Where is thy place of blissful rest ?
See’st thou thy lover lowly laid ?
Hear’st thou the groans that rend his breast ?”

I am well aware that more recent investigations of Mr. Scott Douglass and of Dr. Chambers, prove too clearly that at the very time he was writing his broken-hearted “Lament” over Jean Armour’s desertion of him at the command of her father, occurred this sad episode of Mary Campbell.

My object is neither to excuse nor to condemn ; I am not writing his biography, but simply describing objects and places I have seen connected with the poet, and the impressions they made on me. But where, let me ask, in the annals of literary history, is there the man for whose sufferings we have so much sympathy, and for whose genius a

greater regard than we have for the genius and the sufferings of Robert Burns?

We now stroll beneath the cooling shade that skirts the bonnie Doon, spanned by the "Auld Brig," over which Tam rode on that eventful night, with the hellish legion after him.

"Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig."

Of these two rivers, the Doon and Ayr, Burns was ever wont to sing. His genius has given them an importance they could not otherwise have obtained. Our own sweet poet Whittier, has in consequence mentioned them with the classic rivers of the world.

"We know the world is rich with streams
Renowned in song and story,
Whose music murmurs through our dreams
Of human love and glory.
We know that Arno's banks are fair,
And Rhine has castled shadows,
And poet-tuned, the Doon and Ayr
Go singing down their meadows."

In sending that most beautiful and popular song "The Banks O' Doon" to a friend, Burns says, March 1791; "While here I sit, sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a sodger, and tells me he is going to Ayr. By heavens! say I to myself, with a tide of good spirits, which the magic of that sound "Auld Toon O' Ayr" conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr. Ballantine. Then he gives the song beginning thus,


"Ye flowery banks O' bonnie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' O' care!"

Robert was in his seventh year when the family moved from the cottage in which he was born to Mount Oliphant, about two miles distant from the bridge of Doon. Here he resided until the lease expired, in his eighteenth year.

Owing to the impoverished condition of the land and bad seasons, the family experienced that terrible struggle



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AULD BRIG OF DOON.

with poverty which ended in defeat. This was the period of his life that Burns described as combining "the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing toil of a galley-slave."

It was in his fifteenth summer, whilst toiling on this farm, that he first experienced that sentiment which afterwards led to so much love making, and which inspired his harp with those melodious strains culminating in many a beautiful song. He has so faithfully described this incident, that I prefer giving it in his own words.

"You know" he says, "our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labors of the harvest. In my fifteenth summer my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish idiom. She was a bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass. In short, she altogether, unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys here below.

“How she caught the contagion I cannot tell. Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labors; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Aeolian harp; and especially why my pulse beat such a furious ratan when I looked and fingered over her little hand, to pick out the cruel nettle stings and thistles.

“Among her love-inspiring qualities, she sang sweetly; and it was her favorite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who read Greek and Latin; but my girl sang a song which was said to be composed by a country laird’s son, on one of his father’s maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could shear sheep and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

“Thus with me began love and poetry. I composed a song to her in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this





BANKS OF DOON.

hour I never recollect it, but my heart melts, my blood sallies at the remembrance."

Leaving Mount Oliphant, the family removed to Lochlea, distant about ten miles. Here the clouds of adversity apparently brighter and more distant at first, gradually darkened around them, almost completely obliterating all hope for the future.

The farm although larger and better than the one they had left, did not prove prosperous. Some unfortunate misunderstanding about the meaning of the lease, led to a lawsuit, which lasted three years; the result of which would have landed Burns's good, pious old father in jail, had not death kindly come to his relief. "His all went" says Burns, "among the hell-hounds that prowl in the kennels of justice."

In recalling the beautiful surroundings of this farm, situated among undulating fields, on the North bank of the Ayr, one cannot but feel how happy they might there have been, with only a little, a very little more means.

The view southward is over the hills of Carrick; and westward toward the Isle of Arran, Ailsa Craig, and down the Firth of Clyde toward the Western sea. The mere

mention of these names vividly recalls the impression they made on me when I first beheld them, on my way by sea from Liverpool to Glasgow.

The first I saw of Scotland was the Mull of Galloway, and soon after, the storm-beaten Ailsa Craig, a huge pyramidal rock, rising abruptly from the sea to the height of over a thousand feet, the home of multitudes of sea birds. Later we were abreast of the beautiful Isle of Arran, with the Goatfell mountain towering three thousand feet above the level of old ocean, a jeweled gateway it seemed to the far-famed Highlands.

The morning sun was shining brightly upon its bold furrowed brow, giving it the effect of burnished silver in an emerald setting, as it towered above the greener hills.

It was amid these surroundings, that the spirit of the father of Robert Burns took its flight to heights far above the troubles and anxieties of this world. His loss was felt keenly by his gifted son, who grieved long and sincerely for that dear parent, who was only loath to part from this world, on account of the anxiety he felt for his son's waywardness.

His genius he had always respected, but his stormy passions he felt, would, sooner or later, bring sorrow and

trouble in the train of present difficulties, long after his own body would be peacefully at rest beneath the shadow of Auld Alloway's haunted kirk.

Preparations had been made some months before for the removal of the family to Mossgiel, where Robert and Gilbert had hoped to shelter their parents from the storm that encompassed them.

Hither they moved on their father's death. "Every member of the family," says Gilbert, "contributed their savings towards stocking the place, and each was allowed ordinary wages for the labor he performed on the farm. My brother's allowance and mine was seven pounds per annum each, and during the whole time this family concern lasted, Robert's expenses never in any one year exceeded his slender income."

The following anecdote, related by Gilbert, serves to show how unfit Robert was for the occupation fate seemed ever to have in store for him. "At this time he procured a little book of blank paper, with the purpose, expressed on the first page of making farming memoranda; these are curious enough," Gilbert slyly adds, and he gives the following specimen.

“O why the duce should I repine
And be an ill forboder?
I'm twenty-three, and five foot nine,
I'll go and be a sodger.”

Is there not something inexpressively sad in this anecdote? Genius, taste, inclination, all his higher and nobler aspirations leading him towards those heights where no doubt he saw fame's proud temple, though afar, shining for him, if he could but follow the dictates of his soul. On the other hand, labor, duty to a widowed mother, and the necessity of living; of keeping soul and body together, overweighing everything else, so that he could only follow his Muse but irregularly at best, and only after his body was fatigued by daily toil. Notwithstanding these difficulties, he worked diligently and in secret, producing those works which laid the foundation of his undying fame.

It was here, whilst holding the plough (a favorite situation with him for poetic composition) he wrote the verses to the “Mouse” and to the “Mountain Daisy.”

He used to remark to me, says his brother, that he “could not conceive a more mortifying picture of human



Handwritten signature or mark.

the same work as the other. It is a very common
error to suppose that the same work is done in the
same way. The fact is, that the same work is done
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FROM THE BROWN HILLS OF GARRICK.

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FROM THE BROWN HILLS OF CARRICK.

life, than a man seeking work." It is to this sentiment we owe the elegy "Man was made to Mourn;" and it is to his appreciation of the venerable phrase, "Let us worship God," as it fell from the lips of his honored father, that the world will be forever indebted for that exquisite picture of rural life, "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

In "Man was made to Mourn," Burns is said to have taken many hints from an ancient ballad, entitled, "The Life and Age of Man;" which begins thus:

"Upon the sixteenth hunder year of God, and fifty-three
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear as writings
testifie.

On January, the sixteenth day, as I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say—Ah! man is made
to moan!"

"I had an old grand-uncle," says the poet, in one of his letters to Mrs. Dunlop, "with whom my mother lived in her girlish years; the good old man, for such he was, was blind long ere he died; during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of "The Life and Age of Man."

Burns had now remained long enough on this farm to become convinced that it could do no more at best, than support so large a family ; and he resolved to leave Scotland for the West Indies. He was without sufficient means to defray his expenses, and finally concluded that the small amount necessary for this purpose, might be raised by publishing some of his poems. His friends aided him in obtaining subscribers, and while the printing was in progress, he composed some of his best pieces.

From childhood he had been a great student of nature, nothing escaped him. The wild-flowers his ploughshare had buried, unconsciously appealed to him for an epitaph that gave them immortality.

The sweet song of birds, and the music the winds made sighing through the aeolian harp of winter woods, have been not only recorded by him, but translated into language so simple that we can all understand it.

Of the first edition of six hundred copies, three hundred and fifty were already subscribed for. By this venture the poet found himself in the possession of twenty pounds.

His passage was now engaged, his trunk packed, his last farewell of his friends taken, his last song composed.

He was about leaving Scotland, perhaps forever ; but fate, let us hope, had something better in store for him. A letter was received by a friend of his from Dr. Blacklock of Edinburgh, which again revived the dying spark of hope within his bosom.

He remained, went to Edinburgh, was received, honored, and toasted, by the best society of the capital. His manners were then, as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent. Ladies, noble by birth, but far nobler in their attentions toward him were fascinated by his conversation ; they hung upon his every word, as he told them romantic stories of his rural life and many loves.

Notwithstanding he was surrounded by all these gaities, he did not fail to seek out the house of Allan Ramsay, and on entering it to uncover his head. He did not fail to go, pilgrim like, to pay homage at the grave of Robert Fergusson, his elder brother in the muses, and kneeling down, he kissed the earth above him ; and had a fitting monument erected to his memory at his own expense.

I have stood beside that grave, in the old Canon-gate church-yard, and copied the inscription which Burns had so kindly placed there.

"Here lies Robert Fergusson, poet.

Born Sep. 5th, 1751. Died Oct. 16th, 1774."

"No sculptured marble here, nor pompous lay,
No storied urn nor animated Bust,
This simple stone directs Pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrow o'er her Poet's Dust."


After a short tour through the savage glens of the Highlands, and a visit to the country and grave of Ossian, as well as places famous in history or some old Scottish ballad, he again returns to his home to be gazed and wondered at by his former associates. The plain farmer who had left them but a few months before unknown, had now returned, crowned by the Muses as the greatest poet Scotland ever produced. He had been honored by those who sat in high places in the capital of his country.

The father of Jean Armour now begins to relent, and to see the man in a more favorable light. He now weds his bonnie Jean, the girl who had loved him so long and devotedly.



ST. ALBANS. 1845. BY J. HAYES.

Thames



MOSSGIEL.

Then came the removal to Ellisland, a bad move in some respects, for, as Allan Cunningham's father told him, "He had made a poet's not a farmer's choice." But, no matter, perhaps the poems he now wrote were all the better for his romantic surroundings.

Here Tam O'Shanter and his old grey Meg came staggering through his fancy; and he gave to the "airy nothing" a local habitation and a name."

Here the winds of bonnie Doon were heard in the moonlight of memory; and it was here he moaned his sorrow for his lost Highland Mary in the parting recollections of Auld Lang Syne. Yet he did not prosper. It was again the same old struggle, ending in disappointment.

With a heavy heart he prepares to leave Ellisland. He now parts with his stock, his plough, and the flowery banks of the Nith, where he had so often walked in silent communion with nature.

The family remove to Dumfries, where he for some time entertained high hopes of promotion in the Excise.

Then came the dark days. His moral course was downwards, and his health became much impaired.

The man who could so charm by his social nature as to draw weary travelers from their beds at midnight, and the farmer from his reapers, could hardly resist the fascinating bowl.

Finally his soul became embittered with his pecuniary difficulties, and winter's icy blasts laid him low with rheumatic fever.

Spring came with her blossoms and the singing of birds. He left his home to inhale the balmy air wafted from afar across summer seas; but it brought not back the tint of health to his cheek, nor the elasticity to his step.

Once more he returned to his home. His good and loving wife was too ill to do much for him, but Jessie Lewars, the faithful beautiful Jessie watched over him with tearful eyes, and revived the last spark of sentiment that noble breast was ever destined to feel. He rewarded her with some of his sweetest songs.

“Altho’ thou maun never be mine,
Altho’ even hope is denied,
’Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
Than aught in the world beside.”



Moran


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ALISA CRAIG.





AILSA CRAIG.

Again, a solitary light is seen shining from the window of the room where Robert Burns is lying; casting the flitting shadow of the sorrowing Jessie Lewars across the curtained window.

Thirty-seven and a half years of toil, disappointment, and cold neglect, have done their cruel work. The great poet is passing away.

Again a terrible storm sweeps over the land, from the depth of a nation's heart it comes; it is heard in the wailing cry of thousands of his countrymen who sigh, Remorse! Remorse! It is now too late. The world re-echoes the cry.



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